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THE MADONNA

IN LEGEND AND HISTORY

BY

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THE MOTHER OF JESUS," ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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BISHOP OF SOUTHERN OHIO

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Filippino Lippi.

Pitti Palace, Florence.

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ANGELS.

To

MY DEAR FRIEND

Mary Muhlenberg Emery,

WHOSE LIFE IS FILLED

“WITH ACTS OF KINDNESS AND OF LOVE”

AND WHOSE PURE HEART GIVES HER A CLEAR

VISION OF ALL THINGS GOOD

AND BEAUTIFUL

ILLUSTRATIONS



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INTRODUCTION



THESE "Legends of the Madonna" have an independent interest of their own, but they also form a sequel to another little book by the same author, entitled "Mary, the Mother of Jesus." That was "only a lighted candle held up to the Bible-picture of the Virgin." This is an attempt to connect in a continuous story the legends illustrated in art, through which that simple scriptural idea of "Mary" developed into the mediæval conception and modern cult of "The Madonna."

Legends are born of traditions. Traditions are simply stories told. Legends are the same stories at length written and read. Both have their value as original

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sources of history; though it is the business of the scientific historian to disentangle the facts from the fiction in each case.

The faith of the earliest Christians, for a generation or two, rested mainly upon tradition—that is, upon what others had seen and heard and told, or only partly written. Even our present written Gospels were more or less derived from such original sources. St. Paul bids his converts “hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2d Thess. ii. : 15), and distinctly quotes (Acts xx. : 35) a saying by our Lord not noted elsewhere.

No doubt there was some basis of truth, too, in some of the apocryphal gospels. Why not? There must have been much in Jesus's own life (and so in His Mother's) which was well known to the first dis-

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ciples and yet not recorded in the canonical Gospels. St. John, with whom she made her home, says so in so many words (xxi. : 21). If we could only get at whatever modicum of truth there was in those extra-Biblical stories! Yet who can tell what modern critical study may not accomplish some day in this matter? At any rate, it was those original traditions which were undoubtedly the basis of many of these earlier legends of the Virgin, but which have been so overlaid with myths and other fiction that whatever basis of truth they once had seems now hopelessly perverted and lost. The instinct of the early Church, then, in not admitting such uncertain legends to the canon of Scripture, was clearly sound; for it is out of just such exaggerations and perversions of them that the sweet and humble Mary of the Bible has become at length the deified

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Madonna of popular superstition and a false theology.

We may go deeper in tracing this evolution. The Jews had no notion of any feminine principle or character in God. Other races did attribute it to their deities. In the Artemis, Aphrodite, and Hera of the Greeks, in the Diana, Venus, and Juno of the Romans, we see the distinct deification of virgin purity, maternal love, and queenly power. Then came Christianity with its revelation that in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, were the very completeness and perfection of humanity, all that is best in man and in woman, united to His divinity. In the earliest Christian ages, even in times of persecution, such a Savior was all the comfort and help men wanted. In their simple art He is always represented as "The Good Shepherd." They felt no need of

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His Mother. After the Church had become triumphant in the Roman world, Jesus is represented in art as a King in glory, ruling the destinies of His Church in the world. Still there is no felt need of His Mother.

But when Christianity had begun to grapple again with heathenism and heresy, and later had to flee, for its very life, from a barbarian, wicked world to monasteries and convents, then, as its art shows, Christ was no longer thought of as the loving Savior so much as the awful Judge of mankind. Then men began to yearn for some pitying power to intercede for them with this divine and offended Christ. Who so likely to do it, and so prevailingly, as His own Mother? And so the cult of Mary began. The humanism of the Renaissance, with its renewal of the classic myths, favored the cult. Stories

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of heathen goddesses were mingled with legends of the Virgin and their attributes given to her, until her supposed place and power in heaven lifted her out of all semblance of the simple Mary of the Gospels. Even the Church eagerly seized on this new conception of the Mother of our Lord, offered it to the chief devotions of the faithful, stimulated it in art and authorized it in theology, until at last we have the full-fledged Mariolatry of to-day, with its dogma of the Immaculate Conception and its other almost blasphemous teaching. For if the Roman Church itself has not yet declared, *ex-cathedra*, Mary's share in Christ's redemptive work, and even in His divinity, its authorized writers do teach all this point-blank.*

* "Mary's compassion was itself part of the Passion, as it fitted her for her office in the Church, and as it regarded her co-operation in the work of redemption."—See p. 128, "The Foot of the Cross," by Frederick William Faber, D.D., 16th American edition,

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The Greek Church, while it does encourage prayer to the Virgin as the chiefest of the saints, and even the devotional use of "Eikons" or pictures of her, is very much more moderate in the place and power it attributes to her in heaven.

These legends were for ages locked up in inaccessible manuscripts, and could be learned only from priests and monks, or from pictured walls of churches and monasteries. They have been preserved in such books as the "Golden Legends" of the 13th century, and in the "Lives" of Mary and the Saints. They have been more or less imbedded in the legendary lore of all Christian peoples. Many of

Baltimore, John Murphy & Co., with the approbation of the Most Reverend the Archbishop of Baltimore. Again: "The soul of Mary was raised to the right hand of her Son, on the royal throne of the Most Holy Trinity."—See p. 426 of "The Divine Life of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary," by Mary of Jesus of Agreda, Philadelphia, Peter F. Cunningham & Son, with the Imprimatur of Jacobus Fredericus, Episc., Philadelphien.

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them have been gathered from old German hymns and English carols. The author's object in weaving them together was simply to give a key to many pictures of the Madonna otherwise meaningless. Mrs. Jameson has told us when, where, and how they have been illustrated in art. The author has added a few facts from history to show what a powerful influence they have had at times in making that, and also some of the miracles now attributed to the Madonna in "this (new) age of Mary."

Such legendary lore is undoubtedly fascinating and even ensnaring, but it is also instructive. The sufficient safeguard against any possible danger in it is twofold: First, a knowledge of the simple truth as it is in Jesus, and secondly, a view such as this little book gives us of how vast a mass of fiction has grown up about

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the Mother of our Lord from an almost incalculably slender and uncertain basis of fact.

BOYD VINCENT

CINCINNATI, May, 1899

NOTE

THESE legends were written to be read to a class studying the history of art, in order to interpret the Virgin in devotional pictures. They were afterward read many times in drawing-rooms for the benefit of church work, and are published now at the request of those who heard them.

THE AUTHOR

CINCINNATI, June, 1899

THE MADONNA



Bernardino Luini.

B. Milan.

THE ANGEL APPEARS TO ANNA AND JOACHIM.

THE MADONNA



JOACHIM AND ANNA were the father and mother of the Virgin Mary. Joachim was descended from the royal line of David, and Anna from the priestly line of Aaron, so that the royal and priestly blood mingled in the Mother of our Lord. Tradition says that Joachim and Anna were very pious, very rich, and childless for many years. That they had no children was a great grief to them, as it is to all Jews. When Joachim grew old and began to despair of God's blessing him with a child, he resolved to divide his goods into three parts, and to give one part to the Lord for the Temple service, one to the poor, and to keep one for the support of himself and his wife, whom he

Ancestors
of the
Virgin.

THE MADONNA

Joachim
spurned
from the
Temple.

loved very dearly. To this the pious Anna, whose name means "gracious," gave her consent. But when Joachim went to the Temple to present his offering to the Lord, the High-priest, Issachar, drove him back, saying, "Away with thee, for thou art childless and art under a curse!" And the young men also spurned him and drove him away. Then Joachim searched the Scriptures, and found that all the righteous men and patriarchs of old had been the fathers of sons and daughters. And Joachim mourned bitterly that he had no child, and would not return to his wife, but went into the fields with his hired servants, who watched his flocks. When he came to a mountain not far from Nazareth, he built himself a hut and there he tarried five months. Forty days and nights he fasted and prayed, for he said:

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“Until the Lord look upon me mercifully, prayer shall be my meat day and night.” And he had only the gentle, bleating sheep to comfort him, while he “sat upon the ground and spoke not a word, for his grief was very great.”

Now the pious Anna knew not what had happened to her husband in the Temple, nor why he tarried so long away from her. And when five months had passed, and she had seen or heard nothing from him, she went into her chamber and shut the door and put on mourning apparel, and kneeled down and prayed earnestly and said: “O Thou God of my fathers, why hast Thou thus humbled Thy handmaiden? Thou hast given offspring to all Thy creatures, and to me alone hast Thou denied this gift; and now hast Thou taken my husband also. I beseech Thee, most merciful God, to return my husband unto

Anna's
prayers.

THE MADONNA!

me and to grant us a child, and ~~we~~ will devote it to Thy service and bless Thy name forever." And when she rose up, her handmaiden, Judith, came to her and said: "Wherefore dost thou so afflict thyself? I pray thee be of good cheer, and array thyself in goodly apparel, and bind this fillet, which was given me, about thy hair;" for Anna was still fair to behold. But Anna was greatly incensed, and bade her handmaiden begone and leave her to her grief. Then Judith said: "What evil shall I wish thee, since thou wilt not hearken unto me? Worse I cannot wish thee than that with which the Lord hath already afflicted thee, that thou shouldest not be a mother in Israel." And Anna was sorely troubled at these words, and she laid aside her mourning garments and put on her bridal attire, and went out into the garden and kneeled down under a

Judith's
taunt.

THE MADONNA

laurel tree, and again prayed earnestly. And behold the Angel of the Lord appeared unto her in great glory and said: "Anna, thou beloved of the Lord, fear not. Thy prayers and thine alms have come up before God, and He has seen thy tears, and will take away thy reproach, and thou shalt have a child, and thou shalt call her name Mary, and she shall be blessed through all eternity." Then said the pious Anna: "If this shall come to pass as thou sayest, I will present my daughter to the Lord in His Temple, and she shall serve Him all the days of her life." Then the Angel answered and said: "Thy daughter shall be sanctified by the Lord Most High. She shall be endowed with heavenly innocence and wisdom. She shall be desired by all men; and she shall be the mother of the Messiah, the Saviour of His people." And when the Angel

Angel of
the Lord ap-
pears to
Anna.

THE MADONNA

had thus spoken he vanished; and the holy Anna rejoiced greatly in her heart, and her handmaiden wondered what had come to pass. But Anna had told no one, and kept the secret in her heart!

Angel
appears to
Joachim.

And after this the Angel went to Joachim and found him alone on the mountain, and said: "Joachim, thou Son of David, thy prayers and thy tears have come up before God and have moved Him with pity for thy distress. Behold, thy wife shall bear thee a daughter, and there shall be none like her till the end of the world, as there has been none like her since the beginning. And now rise up and go home to thy wife, who has been comforted in her sorrow; for she is dear to the Lord." And Joachim took a lamb without blemish from his flock and offered it as a burnt offering unto the Lord; and when the smoke of it ascended



Murillo.

The Prado, Madrid.

THE EDUCATION OF THE VIRGIN.

THE MADONNA

unto heaven, then the Angel also ascended. And Joachim was amazed, and fell down on his face, and lay on the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour. Then came his servants and they were frightened, and they lifted him up, and he told them all that had happened !

And when Joachim journeyed toward Jerusalem and came to the Golden Gate, there his wife Anna met him and fell on his neck and kissed him and rejoiced greatly. And when they had thanked God in the Temple and offered unto Him ten sheep, and to the priests ten calves, and one hundred to the people, they returned to their own house, praising God.

Kiss at the
Golden
Gate.

And it came to pass on the 8th day of September, in the year of the world 3985, that Anna gave birth to a daughter, "the master-piece of the ages," as St. Bernard calls her; and she was more beautiful than

THE MADONNA

any child that had ever been born. And she called her name Mary. Tradition says that legions of angels hovered over the place where the infant Mary lay and were ever afterward at her command; and that a band of seraphim continually and invisibly floated above her, as in the background of Raphael's "Sistine Madonna." Birth of the Virgin. And Joachim and Anna loved her exceedingly, and allowed no one to attend her but the pure and gentle daughters of Israel. Her mother made her room a sanctuary, and her cradle was a shrine. When she was two years old, Anna taught her to read and pray in their beautiful garden, while the angels listened; and these angels always washed and dressed her, so that even her mother never saw her lovely form.

And it came to pass, tradition says, that Anna had two more daughters, and she

THE MADONNA

called them Mary also, not knowing which should be the mother of the Messiah as the Angel had promised. The second Mary became the mother of St. John the Evangelist and St. James the Greater; and the third Mary was the mother of four sons, St. Simon, St. Jude, St. Thaddeus, and St. James the Less. These are they who were called "the brethren of the Lord," but tradition says that they were his cousins.

Virgin's sisters named Mary also.

When the first Mary was three years old, Joachim said to Anna, his wife: "It is time to perform our vow unto the Lord. Let us invite the daughters of Israel, and each shall take a lamp in her hand, the symbol of piety, and they shall attend on the child, for we must present her unto the Lord."

And they carried her up to Jerusalem from Nazareth, their own city; and when

THE MADONNA

Virgin's
Presentation
in the
Temple.

they came to the Temple, they placed her on the first of the fifteen steps that led up to the altar, and behold she went up these steps alone, carrying a lamp in her little hand; and when she had laid her gift upon the altar, she stood before the priest with joy and confidence. And the priest blessed her, saying: "Mary, the Lord will magnify thy name to all generations and through thee shall redemption be made known unto Israel." And as she stood before the altar, she danced with her little feet; and all Israel rejoiced with her and loved her, and said: "Behold what manner of maiden is this!" And then her parents delivered her to the priest and bade her farewell and returned to their home. And so Joachim and Anna performed their vow unto the Lord. And this was the Presentation of Mary in the Temple.

After her parents had departed, the

THE MADONNA

priest committed her to the care of Anna, the prophetess, and to the other young maidens who were educated in the Temple; and Mary was said to be wiser and more lovely than any of these daughters of Israel. The Lives of the Virgin say that they called her "My Lady," and made obeisance to her. The sweet old German legends tell how she learned the Psalter by heart, and sang in a low, sweet tone its glorious hymns while about her work. They tell how skilful she was in spinning and weaving and knitting, and that she was never idle nor unhappy; that she fasted and prayed, and that the angels brought her all her food. When she went abroad she bowed her head, and her modesty and beauty were famed abroad through all Israel.

Her life in
the
Temple.

Tradition says that to her the High-priest committed the care of the Holy

THE MADONNA

Place in the Temple with its Altar of Incense, its Table for the Shew bread, and the Seven-branched candlestick, and that to her alone of all her sex was granted the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies to pray before the Ark of the Covenant. It is not surprising that these traditions betray ignorance of such historical facts as that this Ark was not in the restored Temple where Mary was, and often show that mediæval artists had no conception of the architecture of the Temple.

She is told
that she
must marry.

And when Mary was eight years old, the pious Joachim and Anna, the beloved of the Lord, died, and Mary was an orphan, and the Temple of the Lord was her only home. At fourteen years of age the High-priest told her that it was time for her to be married, as was the custom of all Jewish maidens. But she said: "I have consecrated myself to the Lord as

THE MAD

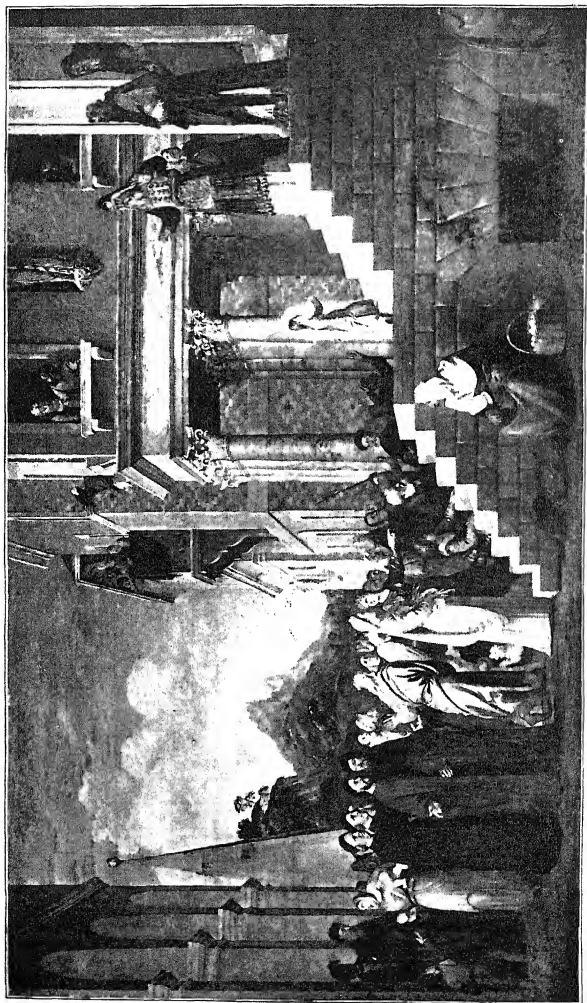
long as I live, and I can make good my
vow." Then the priest said, "No
thing has ever been heard of this
among our people; but I will
'What thou vowest, that thou shalt
do, so call upon the Lord to make known
His will unto thee." Then the Voice of
the Lord was heard in the Temple, say-
ing: "Let all the men of the house of
David of the tribe of Judah come unto
the Temple, and let each one offer on the
Altar a dry rod, and whose rod shall bud
and blossom, and on which the Spirit of
the Lord shall descend, the same is the
righteous man to whom this pure Virgin
shall be given." Then the unmarried
men of the house of David, of the tribe
of Judah, in whose line the Messiah was
promised, assembled themselves together
and presented their rods to the High-
priest, and he laid them on the Altar.

Her suitors
present their
rods.

HE MADONNA

And they all kneeled down before the Altar, and each one prayed that it would be his rod that would bud and blossom. After they had waited a long time and no rod was seen to bloom, they were greatly troubled. Then the Voice of the Lord was heard again, saying: "Joseph of Bethlehem, of the house of David, is not here, for in his humility he was afraid to come. Let him be called, and let him present his rod before the Lord." Then the priest sent for Joseph, and he came as he was commanded. Now Joseph was an old man and a widower, and he was a carpenter by trade; and when he presented his rod, lo! it budded and blossomed into a lovely lily, and a dove of dazzling whiteness issued out of it, and after hovering over Joseph's head, flew up to heaven. Then the other suitors broke their rods in anger and dismay. But the

Joseph of
Bethlehem
chosen.



Titian.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN.

Accademia di Belle Arti, Venice.

THE MADONNA

High-priest said to Joseph, "Thou art the person to take the Virgin of the Lord and to keep her for Him." And Joseph said: "I am not worthy, but I will do as the Lord hast commanded me, and I will be as a father to this holy maiden." Then Mary blessed him, and Joseph took her reverently by the hand, and led her away to prepare for the betrothal ceremony. Some traditions say that they were married on the 23d of January at the steps of the Temple, and that Mary, attended by virgins and angels, received the Mosaic blessing from the High-priest, who joined their hands, and that Joseph gave her a ring and bowed himself before her, while the other suitors looked on frowning in envy and despair. Then Joseph said to Mary: "Behold, I have taken thee from the Temple of the Lord; and now I will leave thee in my own house, for I must go

Marriage of
the Virgin.

THE MADONNA

and follow my trade, for I am a poor man. I will return to thee; and meanwhile the Lord be with thee and watch over thee." And Mary said: "The Lord watch between thee and me while we are absent one from another." Then Joseph went away. So, in the house of her husband, Mary spent the first days of her married life in the sweet, domestic duties of a home, in prayer and meditation, the angels her only companions. Then came the miracle of the ages, the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The An-
nunciation.

The Annunciation, some traditions say, took place at evening just after sunset, the time, for ages since, of the "Angelus" and the "Ave Maria." Gabriel, the Archangel and messenger of God, came down from heaven to announce to this Virgin-wife that she had found favor with Him, and that she was to be the Mother of His Son.

THE MADONNA

Some legends say that Gabriel descended in the clouds with a band of angels, who waited at the gate, eager to see her who was to be the Queen of Heaven. Some say that he came alone and with such soft and gentle tread that Mary at first did not hear him as she sat on her porch, reading the book of Isaiah, her distaff fallen at her feet, her basket with the flax beneath the table near her, while birds fluttered and sang around her, the emblem of her spiritual joys. Others say that Gabriel came at midnight with great awakening light; and again, that he met her at a fountain whither she had gone to draw water. The legends vary, as do the pictures of this wonderful scene. But all agree that the angel came with glorious wings, and that he was beautiful and radiant with eternal youth as he knelt adoringly before her, holding a lily or a sceptre in his hands,

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while he told her of this marvellous mystery in the overshadowing presence of the Holy Ghost, Who descended upon her in the form of a dove. St. Bernard says that she was reading the prophecy, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," and that she exclaimed, "Oh, that I might see her and kiss her feet!" when suddenly the glorious vision of the Angel and the descending dove burst upon her, and the holy prophecy was fulfilled.

Legend adds but little to the Bible story of her hasty visit to the hill country of Judæa to visit her cousin Elisabeth, except that angels guarded her and one faithful servant attended her. Elisabeth is said to have met her in a portico or garden, where we are told that Mary often walked during her long visit with her cousin. It was here that she happened one day to touch a modest, little white

The Visitation and legend of the blue violet.

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flower just looking up from among its leaves, and having caught the hue of her mantle, it scented the air with its delicate fragrance. And that is the way the white violets turned blue and became sweet.

There is a most interesting legend which says that when Cæsar Augustus consulted Tiburtina, the sibyl, whether it would be pleasing to the gods to have him receive the divine honors which the Roman Senate had accorded him, the sibyl, after waiting a few days, took him apart and showed him an altar, and above the altar in the opening heavens he saw a beautiful Virgin in great glory, holding an infant in her arms, and at the same time he heard a voice from heaven, saying, "This is the Altar of the Son of the living God." Whereupon Augustus caused an altar to be erected on this spot, the Capitoline Hill

The Tibur-
tina legend.

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in Rome, with the inscription, "Ara Primogeniti Dei," that is, "The Altar of the First Begotten of God." On this spot, in commemoration of this tradition, was built in later years the well-known Roman Church, called the Ara Coeli, "the Altar of Heaven," with its one hundred and twenty marble steps and celebrated Bambino, the hideous and jewel-bedizened image of the Christ-Child. This was said to be one of the strange harbingers of the Nativity of Christ.

History tells us that it was at this time that Augustus caused all the world to be registered for a census (the Bible says "for taxation"), when Mary and Joseph went up to Bethlehem to be enrolled. On the long, steep road Joseph supported the delicate Mary with his arm reverently about her, while an angel led the way and

THE MADONNA

lighted their path by a torch at night, Mary all the while patient in her weariness and pain. When they arrived at Bethlehem, there was no room for them in the inn, and Joseph expostulated with its master, while Mary kneeled on the ground, the innkeeper's wife regarding her with great pity and distress. But they were obliged on that cold, starry night to seek shelter in a cave used for a stable, just opposite the ruins of the house of Jesse, her far-back ancestor, and near where David watched his flocks. We are told that while Joseph had gone to seek some woman to care for the suffering Mary, the Child was born, and when Joseph returned with the woman, who was Mary of Salome, said by some to be her own sister, and who vowed to attend on Mary and the Child as long as she lived, they found the place where Mary

The Virgin's journey to Bethlehem to be taxed.

The Nativity.

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and the young Child were filled with light brighter than the sun at noonday, and which so dazzled their sight that they could not see the Infant in the Virgin's arms. Some legends say that they found the Virgin kneeling before the Child, worshipping Him, while the angels with folded wings adored Him with her, and the oxen came from their stalls and kneeled before the Child and warmed Him with their sweet breath. The straw on which He lay ripened into wheat, and bees hummed harmless around Him. A band of angels from the heavenly hosts, who sang the "Gloria in Excelsis," swept down from the celestial choir and showered the Virgin-Mother and the Child with roses from Paradise. The Shepherds came, with whom, tradition says, were St. Simon and St. Jude, and presenting them with a young lamb, piped and danced before

Adoration
of the
Shepherds.



Raphael.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE VIRGIN.

Pinacoteca, Milan.

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them. Then the Wise Men—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar—came, guided by a star which shone with lustrous light in the forehead of a radiant child, who winged his way before them in the air, bearing a cross in his hand; and they offered their costly gifts, holding a jewelled Crown above the Christ-Child's head while He slept, always with His little arms crossed over His heart. The Virgin in return gave them one of the linen bands in which He was wrapped, and they laid it among their treasures and bowed themselves to the earth and departed. Tradition adds to this story that St. Thomas in his mission to the Indes found these Wise Men many years later and baptized them, and that afterward they were put to death for their faith and thus received the crown of martyrdom. Their bones were found over three centuries

The three
Kings and
legend of
the Star.

THE MADONNA

later, and St. Helena, the Mother of Constantine, had them preserved, and now they are in the Cathedral of Cologne—so the legend goes.

Legend of
the Christ-
mas-rose.

But to return to Mary and the Christ-Child. After the Shepherds and the Wise Men had departed, Salome, grieving that she had no gift to offer to the Infant King, went out in the night and wept bitterly; and lo! in the morning, she found that her tears had been turned to roses, which she gathered and laid among the wheat around the Child. This is the origin of the legend of "the Christmas-rose."

Presentation
of Christ in
the Temple.

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple is called the first of Mary's Seven Sorrows, because her heart was deeply troubled by the predictions of Simeon at that time. Tradition says that Simeon was one of the number commissioned nearly three hun-

THE MADONNA

dred years before to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, and that to him had been given the book of Isaiah to translate. When he came to the passage "A virgin shall bear a Son," he wrote it, "A young woman shall bear a son;" and when he had so written it, an angel effaced it, and as often as Simeon wrote it, as he thought, correctly, the angel blotted it out. Then a revelation came to Simeon, that he should not see death till he should see the Lord's Christ. So for more than two hundred years he tarried on the earth till this wonderful thing had come to pass; and he was led up by the Spirit into the Temple at the very hour that Mary went there to present her Son, and taking the Child in his arms, he exclaimed, "Lord, *now* lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." And Anna, the aged prophetess,

Legend of
Simeon.

THE MADONNA

who had been the devoted nurse of Mary during her childhood in the Temple, came forward at that instant and blessed the Child and His Mother, and praised God.

Legends of
the Flight
into Egypt.

When the Holy Family fled from Herod into Egypt, it is said that the ox and the ass, which did homage to the Divine Child in the manger, accompanied them in their flight; that three angels led the ass on which Mary and the Child sat; that they guarded them by day, guided them over lakes and streams, pitched their tent at night, and refreshed them with celestial fruits and flowers. Many beautiful legends are told of their flight into Egypt and their repose there. As they entered a wilderness all the trees bowed down before them except the aspen, which it is said, alas! that Jesus cursed, and that from that day to this it has never ceased

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to tremble. The palm trees waved their branches and bowed themselves to the earth to offer their fruit to the Mother and Child. The legend adds that the date pit has ever since borne the impress of the little teeth of Jesus. Once the Holy Family rested in a sycamore grove, and a fountain miraculously gushed forth from the roots of one of the trees. This gave a religious interest to the sycamores, and the Crusaders, centuries afterward, brought them to Europe. Again, when the travelers feared that Herod's soldiers would overtake them, they came to a field where a man was sowing wheat. And Mary said to him, "If anyone shall ask you whether we have passed this way, ye shall answer, 'Such persons did pass when I was sowing seed.'" And by a miracle the wheat grew and ripened in a night. The next day the soldiers came, and the man, who was

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already cutting his wheat, answered as Mary had told him, and their pursuers turned back. At another time thieves fell upon them and would have plundered and murdered them, but one of them, called Zuccaro, interfered and said, "Suffer them to go in peace and I will give you thirty pieces of silver and my girdle." And having prevailed on his comrades to let them go, he led the holy travellers to a grotto and gave them food and lodging for the night. Then Mary said to him, "The Lord will receive thee on His right hand and grant thee pardon for thy sins." And it came to pass as she said; for when Christ was crucified, this was the man, legend says, who was crucified on His right hand, and that the merciful thief's sins were forgiven him, and that he was with his Saviour in paradise!

The idols of the Egyptians fell on

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their faces as they passed by, and when they reached the Pyramids, we are told, Mary and the Child slept between the great feet of the Sphinx, a light from the Child illuminating that old Egyptian riddle of the ages. Another queer old legend of their journey is found in Italian and German ballads, which tell that Mary encountered the gypsy Zingarella, who crossed the Child's palm after the manner of gypsies, and then foretold all that He should suffer as the Redeemer of the world. In return she asked for no silver, but that her sins might be forgiven her and that she might inherit eternal life. Tradition adds nothing scarcely to the Scripture story of the return from Egypt, except that one says that the boy Jesus had grown and was able to carry a basket with Joseph's tools. Nor do they tell us anything more of the quiet home life at Nazareth, except

She sleeps
between the
feet of the
Sphinx.

Zingarella.

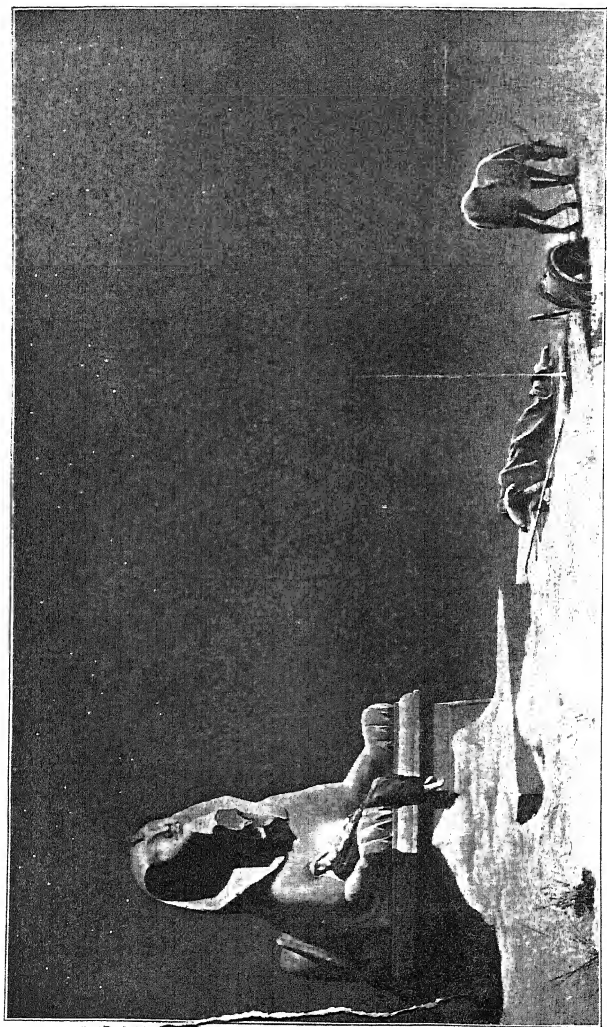
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Holy
Families.

that the aged Elisabeth and the child John are said to have lived with them in their sweet content, and so made a part of the Holy Family. Pictures which represent Mary and the Holy Child, Joseph and Elisabeth and the little John are called "Holy Families;" those including angels and saints are simply devotional.

German legend of the
Christ-Child.

You will pardon a slight digression here, if I give you one of the many legends which cluster around the Christ-Child in Germany, that home of legendary lore. The German peasants believe that the Christ-Child wanders over the world every Christmas Eve, bearing on His shoulders a bundle of evergreens. Over mountains and streams, through forests and cities and towns to lordliest castles and humblest huts, to cathedrals and shrines and palaces, in the cold and the storm, the



Merion.

THE REPOSE IN EGYPT.

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Holy Child toils on, to be welcomed or rejected as He comes again to the dear world His Father loved so well. Those who watch and long for His coming set a candle in the window to guide and cheer Him on His way, and they believe that they receive Him in the person of any wayfaring man or poor child who enters their doors. They are confident that He exclaims, "Expected here! Expected here!" as He sees the welcome light beaming from their windows, and that He enters to leave His blessing with an ever-green bough. But when He sees no light, and receives no welcome, He sighs, "Rejected here! rejected here!" and His little feet bleed on the snow as He trudges on.

Mary had her second Sorrow in losing Jesus in Jerusalem when they took Him up to the Feast. And again her heart was

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The death
of Joseph.

deeply grieved in the death of the just and gentle Joseph, at whose side she and Jesus sat with the children, who, tradition says, were his by a former wife. And Jesus comforted His mother there, while He held the hand of His dying foster-father. And when Joseph's own children wept sorely that their father was dead, Jesus, speaking of it, said: "And my Mother and I wept with them." Tradition adds that He summoned the Archangel Michael to bear away the spirit of Joseph and to carry it to heaven. Then Jesus is said to have baptized His Mother in the Jordan.¹

Jesus baptizes His Mother.

The Marriage at Cana of Galilee.

The Marriage at Cana of Galilee is believed to have been the marriage of St. John and Mary Magdalene, and that ever afterward they followed and ministered

¹ The legends thus far have been mostly according to German and old English rendering.

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to Christ and His Mother. From that time till the Passion of our Lord, Roman Lives of the Virgin contain little more than the account of how she was occupied in prayer without ceasing for the sins of the world, in alms-giving and work for the poor, in superhuman fastings, in which she was sustained by the ministering angels ever present with her, and in prostrations and genuflections without number. These Lives again and again assert that she was repeatedly vouchsafed the rapture of the Beatific Vision, and that she was often transported into heaven and "made a part of the Divine Essence."

Roman accounts of the occupations of the Virgin.

Tradition has hardly dared to add anything to the awful sacredness of our Lord's Passion. He is said to have bidden His Mother a sorrowful farewell before "He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem"

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The Virgin
at the Feast
of the Pass-
over.

to suffer and to die. We are told that she was present but apart at the Feast of the Passover; that the Angel Gabriel passed her the Bread and the Cup from the hands of our Lord, and that she received them meekly on her knees. She is said to have known of Judas's treachery and to have prayed with him to give up his wicked design. After the Betrayal and the Scourging and False Trial, when Jesus was passing along the Via Dolorosa ~~on the way to Calvary, she~~ joined the women of Jerusalem in the sorrowful procession. And when she beheld her Son sinking under the weight of the Cross, she fell fainting to the earth—the only story of her ever betraying any weakness! Music, with its mournful *Stabat Mater*s, best tells the story of how she “stood” at the Cross so strong in her maternal anguish. No pictures have adequately represented her

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silent, heroic fortitude there. Two or three beautiful legends are told of the Cross and the Crucified One, and are not disconnected with His Mother, who must have seen all that transpired through that agonizing watch. The legend of the Cross itself is associated with her. When Adam and Eve were banished from Paradise, they lived in penitence and prayer, hoping to atone for their disobedience. So when Adam came to die, he called unto him Seth and said, "My son, go to the terrestrial Paradise, and ask the angel with the flaming sword who guards the gate to send me a bough of the balsam tree, which shall ease my soul in death. You will easily find the way, for my footsteps scorched the earth as I was driven forth." And Seth did as his father had commanded him, and as he drew near to Paradise, he found the earth covered with

Legend of
the Cross.

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verdure and with flowers. But when he asked the angel with the flaming sword for the balsam bough, the angel said, "The time of redemption has not come. Four thousand years must roll away before the Redeemer shall open the gate of Paradise, which Adam closed by his disobedience. But as a token of future pardon, the wood whereon redemption shall be won shall grow from thy father's tomb." And the angel opened the gate far enough for Seth to see a fountain, clear as crystal, gushing forth in living streams, and before it a mighty tree, whose roots were in hell and whose branches reached to heaven. The boughs were covered with leaves and flowers and fruit. But the fairest fruit was a beautiful little Babe, bright as the sun, around whose head fluttered seven doves, and a Woman more lovely than the moon bore the child in her arms. Then the

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angel said, "I give thee now three seeds from this wonderful tree, and when thy father is dead, place these three seeds in his mouth and bury him." Then Seth returned to his father and told him what he had seen and what the angel had given him. And when Adam died, Seth placed the seeds in his father's mouth and buried him in Golgotha. And three trees grew from these three seeds. With the branches from one Moses performed his miracles in Egypt; the second tree gave the healing properties to the pool of Bethesda, which was near it; and from the third the executioners cut the beams for the Cross on which the Saviour was crucified. After the Crucifixion this was buried on Calvary and was found by the mother of Constantine. This story, with all its details and various renderings, part of which are preserved in a Syriac manu-

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script in the British Museum, is one of the wildest of mediæval legends.¹

The legend of the Holy Grail is also associated with the Madonna. It is the mystical and confused story of how Joseph of Arimathea gathered the Divine Blood from the Saviour's wounds in a vessel from which our Lord had supped at the Last Supper. Joseph was imprisoned for forty years, but in some mysterious way concealed the sacred vessel, and subsisted on its contents till someone was found pure enough to guard it. It was always under the special protection of Mary, and was at last, according to the Arthurian Legend, lodged in the Castle of the Grail, where it was under the guardianship of Amfortas, who with his court was for ages

Legend of
the Holy
Grail.

¹ Professor Riley of Oxford, in his "Athos, the Mountain of the Monks," estimates that there are over 125,000 cubic feet of what is called the true Cross preserved as relics in the churches and monasteries of Europe.



German School.

National Gallery, London.

THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN.

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under a spell, dying but not dead, for evil deeds done while custodian of this holy relic. The blinding splendor that blazed forth from it concealed it from all those who were not pure in heart and life. Many a true and loyal Christian knight had gone in quest of it, vowing never to return till he had found it. But none succeeded till Sir Galahad, a descendant of Joseph, so one legend says, "whose strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure," reached the castle, but failed to secure it through over-confidence at the last. This legend of the Grail has been the theme of poetry and art for ages and the groundwork of many a superstition. To these legends of the Cross I will add one about the tender little bird, which is said to have seen the agony of the Saviour there, and which, in frantic pity, tried to pull out the cruel nails from the bleeding

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hands, which His Mother could not reach.

Legend of
the Cross-
bill.

This bird has ever since been called the red Cross-bill, because it carries blood-red stains on its small bill. Longfellow has recorded this legend in a few sweet verses.

Mary is said to have waited at the Cross till the Holy Body was taken down, and to have held it in her arms in her supreme and silent grief. Pictures representing this scene are called "Pietas." Romanists dare to say that there were two altars on Calvary, the Cross and Mary's heart !

Pietas.

St. Ambrose in the fourth century says that there existed then an ancient tradition that Christ manifested Himself to His Mother before He did to Mary Magdalene ; that she was praying fervently when a bright company of angels entered her room and knelt down before her and sang the "Salve Regina," their welcome to the Queen of Heaven, and that when

Christ manifested Himself to His Mother after the Resurrection.

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their heavenly strains had ceased, Christ Himself, clothed in white, bearing in His hand the standard of the Cross, entered her presence, followed by the patriarchs and prophets whose spirits He had released from prison. And they all knelt before her and saluted her. Then he bade her be comforted and weep no more, for the pains of death had passed away and the gates of hell had not prevailed against Him. And she thanked Him meekly on her knees, that it had pleased Him to redeem mankind.

Tradition says that Mary was with the disciples at the Ascension, and that when she saw the Lord lifted up on the clouds and passing away out of her sight, she called to Him and said, "My Son, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." And then Mary's seventh and last Sorrow was completed.

Tradition
that the
Virgin witnessed the
Ascension.

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She formulates the Apostles' Creed.

Before the Apostles departed to preach and teach as the Lord had commanded them, Mary, to whose care, tradition says, they were committed, called them together, and before bidding them farewell, desired each of them to declare one article of his Christian faith, and as they stated them, she wrote them down and named them "The Apostles' Creed."

Her letter to the people of Messina.

The rest of her life was spent with St. John, tradition says, in his house on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, and in his home on the Sea of Galilee, where she loved to be. During this period a Sicilian legend asserts that she honored the people of Messina with a letter written with her own hand, dated in the year of her Son 42. Traditions vary about the date of her death. Some place it at about 48 A.D. and some as late as 65 A.D.

It was not long before she died that

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St. Luke was told in a dream to go to the Mother of our Lord and to beg her to permit him to paint her portrait. Obeying the heavenly voice, he told her of the command he had received. She meekly consented, believing it to be the will of God, telling him, though, that she had never seen her own face in a mirror and so could be no judge of its merits, and requesting that, if possible, he would represent her as she had been in youth, holding her Divine Child. Angels attended him while painting; one handed him his brush, another mixed his colors, all eager to do him service. Darkness interrupted his work, and when he returned to complete it, the Virgin was dead, but the angels had finished the picture. The so-called St. Luke's portrait of the Virgin is now in the Borghese Chapel of the magnificent church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

St. Luke's
portrait of
the Virgin.

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This was built by John, the Roman patrician, and Pope Liberius, who, desiring to honor the Virgin, erected it where, she told them in a vision, snow would fall on the night of August 5th. So showers of white rose-leaves are thrown on the congregation of the faithful, who every year commemorate this day in the chapel where the portrait hangs.

Her Death
and As-
sumption.

The following legend of her Death and Assumption is given very fully by Mrs. Jameson: On a certain day the heart of the Virgin was filled with inexpressible longing to behold her Son, and she wept abundantly, when suddenly an angel appeared before her and saluted her, saying, "Hail, Mary, full of grace! I bring thee a branch of palm gathered in Paradise. Command that it be carried before thy bier on the day of thy burial, for in three days thy soul shall enter Paradise, where

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thy Son awaits thy coming." And Mary bowed her head and said, "Be it unto me as thou sayest; and if I have found favor in thy sight, grant that the Apostles, my brethren, may be reunited to me before I die, that in their presence I may yield up my soul to God. And I pray thee also that I may not, in the hour of death, be affrighted by any evil spirits, and that they may have no dominion over me." And the angel said, "Doubt not that all the Apostles shall be reunited to thee this very day, and fear not the power of any evil spirit; for hast thou not bruised the serpent's head and destroyed his kingdom?" And having thus spoken the angel departed into heaven, and the palm branch that he left behind him shed light from every leaf, and sparkled as the stars of the morning. Then Mary lighted her lamp, and prepared her bed, and waited till her

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The Apostles surround her death-bed.

hour should come. At the same time, John, who was preaching at Ephesus, and Peter, who was preaching at Antioch, and all the other Apostles, who were scattered throughout the world, were suddenly caught up by some miraculous power and found themselves before the door where Mary was. And when Mary saw them all gathered around her, she thanked God and placed in the hands of St. John the shining palm branch and desired that he should bear it before her as the angel had commanded. Then Mary kneeled down and prayed to her Son to receive her, and the Apostles prayed with her; after which she laid herself upon her bed and composed herself for death. And John wept bitterly. And about the third hour of the night, as Peter stood at her head and John at her feet and the other apostles near her, a sound of celestial music was heard in



Ghirlandajo.

Cathedral, Prato.

THE VIRGIN THROWING HER GIRDLE TO ST. THOMAS, AFTER THE ASSUMPTION.

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the air and sweet fragrance filled all the house. And Jesus Himself appeared, accompanied by an innumerable host of angels, patriarchs, and prophets, singing hymns of joy. And Jesus, bending over His Mother, said, "Arise, my beloved, Jesus appears to her. come with me from Lebanon and receive the crown that is destined for thee." And Mary, lifting up her eyes to her Son, said, "My heart is ready; for it was written, 'I come to do Thy Will.'" And immediately the soul of Mary left her body and was received into the arms of her Son, and together they ascended into heaven, while the angels sang "Hosannas in the Highest," and the echoes of their song did not die away till she was buried.

As the Apostles saw her soul mounting upward with their Lord, they cried: "O most spotless Virgin, remember us and

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pray for us, when thou comest into thy glory!" And the angels who welcomed her in heaven sang: "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved; who is fairer than all the daughters of Jerusalem?"

Three among the virgins of the Temple
Her Burial. prepared the body of Mary for the tomb; but such a glory surrounded it that no human eye could see the chaste and sacred form unclothed. And when all was ready the Apostles took it up reverently and laid it on a bier, St. John bearing the shining palm branch before it. Peter sang the 114th Psalm, "In Exitu Israel de Egypto," and the angels followed after, also singing. The wicked Jews, hearing these melodious voices ran together, and the High-priest, being seized with fury, laid his hands upon the bier, intending to overturn it upon the earth; but both his arms were suddenly

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withered up, so that he could not move them, and he was overcome with fear and prayed to Peter for help. Then Peter said: "Have faith in Jesus Christ and His Mother and thou shalt be healed;" and it was so. And they carried the body to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where Joachim and Anna were buried; and there they buried Mary.

On the third day afterward Jesus said to His angels: "What honor shall I confer on her, who was my mother on the earth?" And they said: "Suffer not that body, which was Thy temple, to see corruption." And Jesus consented that it should be so; and the Archangel Michael brought to the Lord the soul of Mary, and the Lord called from heaven, saying: "Rise up, my love, my undefiled, for thou shalt not remain in the darkness of the grave nor shalt thou see corruption." And

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immediately the soul of Mary rejoined her body, and she arose gloriously from the tomb and ascended into heaven, transported and welcomed by legions of angels, blowing their silver trumpets and harping on their harps of gold, and singing: "Who is this that riseth as the morning, fair as the moon, terrible as an army with banners?" And the Apostles watched her as she mounted upward and was lost to their sight in the light of heaven. But one of their number was absent, the same Thomas who doubted that the Lord had risen, and he desired that the tomb of Mary should be opened that he might believe in her Assumption. And when it was opened, they found that the body of Mary was gone, and that roses and lilies were growing where they had laid it. Then Thomas, looking up toward heaven, beheld the Virgin in radiant light, fairer

Her empty
tomb found
blooming
with lilies.

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than all the daughters of men, and for the assurance of his faith she flung him her girdle, the same, it is said, which to this day is preserved in the Cathedral of Prato. The girdle of the Virgin has a long, legendary history. St. Thomas treasured it for years, and at his death entrusted it to a devout man, who gave it as a marriage portion to his daughter. Her husband appreciated its sacredness, and, on a long voyage from the East to Italy, thought that it would be safer if he slept on the casket that contained it. Every time he did it the angels lifted him to the floor, till he realized that he was wanting in reverence for the sacred relic, and so he slept on the floor beside it till he committed it to the care of the Bishop of Prato.

Legend of
the Girdle.

Legend says the Assumption of the Virgin was followed by her Coronation in

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Her Coronation as Queen of Heaven.

the highest heaven at the Father's right hand. There she was seated or knelt before her Son, who placed on her bowed head a resplendent crown. The Father stretched out His arms and blessed her, and the Holy Spirit hovered over her, and all the cherubim and seraphim saluted her as the Queen of Angels and of Heaven!

These are the traditions developed into legends, which have transformed the simple, retiring Mary of the Gospel story into the Madonna of the Greek and Roman churches. To have a fully adequate conception of her, there must be added a few facts, at least, concerning her place in authentic history. Her influence has indeed been mostly confined within the Church and devotional art, though no honest historian can deny that through it, as an ob-

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ject of supreme devotion to the Knights of Chivalry, she has had an influence reaching far beyond the Church, which has done much to lift women from their former low estate to their now elevated position. May they never forget to bless her for it! For to the Virgin Mary belongs the honor of making purity, sweetness, and truth the highest ideal of all true womanhood. Without her the world would never have had its "Sistine Madonna" and much of its pure devotional music. It was she who inspired such men as Raphael and Palestrina, and it was faith in her supposed power to succor and save, and a grateful devotion for it, which stimulated men to build hundreds of the most beautiful churches of Christendom. The story of these would fill volumes. The history of two or three repeats itself in them all.

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For instance, when the people of Siena were besieged by the Florentines, and their city was threatened with destruction, they chose a certain Bonaguida as their leader; and after long deliberation this good man, barefooted, and with his girdle round his neck, led the people in solemn procession to the Duomo, where, after the Bishop had taken him in his arms and kissed him, he stood before the picture of the Virgin and prayed thus to her: "O Mother most pitiful! O Counsel and Help of the afflicted, help us! I give and dedicate to thee the city of Siena with all its inhabitants, and I lay its keys upon thy altar. Guard it from every wicked work, above all from the Florentines. O Mother compassionate, graciously accept these gifts of our good will and deliver us!" That night a heavy mist was seen to hang over the city, and the people said



Fra Filippo Lippi.

THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

Galleria Antica e Moderna, Florence.

THE MADONNA

it was the mantle of the Virgin, who was watching over Siena. The next day the Sienese marched out to meet their foes with bold hearts, trusting in her protection. The battle was long and furious, but their victory was complete. The Florentines were routed or killed in heaps around their sacred Carroccio, which they wept over, kissed, and died defending. The completion and adornment of the great Cathedral of Siena, one of the most beautiful in all Italy, was the votive offering of the people to "Our Lady of the Assumption" for her signal deliverance of them from the hands of their enemies.

Cathedral of
Siena a
votive offer-
ing to the
Virgin.

And in the same way she made a chapter of history in Venice, where the people vowed to build her a beautiful church if she would stay the great plague of 1630, when over forty-six thousand of its inhabitants died. After solemn ser-

Also the
church of
Sta. Maria
della Salute
at Venice.

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vices and prayers at all her shrines by a multitude of people clothed in sackcloth, the plague was stayed, and the Church of Santa Maria della Salute rises in its beauty and fair proportions from Venetian waters, a fulfilment of the people's vow.

Number of
feasts,
churches,
and shrines
in her
honor.

Could there be any more conclusive, logical facts as to her influence in church history than that there are in England alone, according to Mrs. Jameson, twenty-one hundred and twenty churches called after her? Of the four hundred and thirty-three public churches and chapels in Rome, there are one hundred and twenty-one dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and only fifteen to our Divine Lord! In the Roman liturgy thirty-nine feasts are appointed in her honor, and only twenty to our Redeemer! Rufini, a reliable Italian authority, according to Lanciani, states that in 1853 there were in

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Rome fourteen hundred and twenty-one images of the Madonna in street shrines, kept lighted day and night, a proof of her hold on men's and women's hearts.

How beautifully Hawthorne in the Marble Faun has idealized a natural devotion to the Mother of Jesus, in the shrine of Mary, and the lamp kept burning there by the holy Hilda!

But her power over men's lives was never more signally proved than in the long vigil of Loyola at the shrine of the Virgin at Montserrat, and his vows made there when he laid his lance at her feet, and which no doubt led him on to that final and complete self-renunciation which resulted in the formation of the most powerful society ever devised by man. Mary inspired Loyola, Loyola made the society of Jesus, and the Jesuits made history all over the world.

She inspired
Loyola.

Another instance of her direct influence

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She enlight-
ened St.
Bernard of
Clairvaux.

over the lives of men is in the heavenly vision the great and good St. Bernard of Clairvaux is said to have had of her, when she came to strengthen his faith and enlighten his mind, while engaged on some of his profound theological writings.

Her miracle
at St.
Sophia.

But the strangest historical fact connected with her, and only to be accounted for by the widespread and unshaken faith in her power and love, is the superstitious belief in her miracles, which still exists among the Romanists in this enlightened age. None more thrilling was ever attributed to her in the Greek Church than when the church of St. Sophia was taken at the fall of Constantinople. As the shrieks and groans of those without the church were heard, tradition asserts that a priest was celebrating the last mass. Just as the words of invitation were said for the last time within the venerable walls,

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the Turks rushed into the church. A quick glance behind him, an imploring cry to God and Mary, and then, bearing the Host in his hands, he passed through the solid wall, opened by Mary, and left no trace behind him. A little chapel has since been found in the thickness of the wall where, tradition says, he entered, and from this descends a staircase encumbered with rubbish!

The removal of her home from Nazareth to Loreto through the air, over sea and land, by a band of angels, to secure it from profanation by the Saracens, is another of her most famous miracles.

Her house at Nazareth miraculously removed to Loreto.

The most incredible of those ascribed to her in modern times have been performed at Lourdes in southern France, where she is said to have appeared to a pious peasant girl, and blessed the waters of a spring where the girl was bathing.

Her miracles and votive offerings at Lourdes.

THE MADONNA

Thousands of pilgrims go there yearly now to be healed by these waters. The votive offerings in the church of Notre Dame, recently erected in this little town, are of fabulous cost. Thousands of diamonds, pearls, and precious stones adorn them. The most touching of all is a banner hung over the altar on which are tied the long, beautiful tresses of poor women, who had nothing else to offer to "The Mother of the Afflicted." One of the most tender of these miracles is told in a poem of Adelaide Procter, called "The Legend of Provence." It tells how a lovely orphan girl was brought up by the nuns of "Our Lady of the Hawthorn," that she was the idol of their hearts, the convent's child, and became a nun herself as Sister Angela. She passed her time in pious work and purest joys, trimming the lamps before the shrines, and embroidering the

"The Legend of Provence" as told in a poem by Adelaide Procter.

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altar-cloths with her dainty fingers. Besides these pious tasks

An office she would never miss nor share,
Was every day to weave fresh garland sweet,
To place before the shrine at Mary's feet.

And then the old story is told again, of how a wounded knight was brought one day to the convent gate, and how the gentle sisters took him in and nursed him back to life. But alas! with life returned, he wooed and won the love of Angela, the trusted child and nun. They fled, and for a while were happy in their love. But Angela awoke at last from this fair dream and found her knight unfaithful to his vows. Years of misery went on in reckless woe, till finally a longing uncontrolled comes over her to see her convent-home and die. Weary and worn and desperate, she begs her way back to its closed gate.

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She rang the convent bell. The well-known sound
Smote on her heart, and bowed her to the ground,
And she who had not wept for long, dry years
Felt the strange rush of unaccustomed tears.
Terror and anguish seemed to check her breath
And stop her heart ! O God ! could this be death ?
Crouching against the iron gate she laid
Her weary head against the bars and prayed.
But nearer footsteps drew, then seemed to wait---
And then she heard the opening of the grate
And saw the withered face, on which awoke
Pity and sorrow as the portress spoke,
And asked the stranger's bidding. " Take me in,
She faltered, " Sister Monica, from sin
And sorrow and despair, that will not cease,
O take me in and let me die in peace ! "
With soothing words the Sister bade her wait
Until she brought the key to unbar the gate.
The beggar tried to thank her as she lay
And heard the echoing footsteps die away.
But what soft voice was that, which sounded near
And stirred strange trouble in her heart to hear ?
She raised her head—she saw—she seemed to know
A face that came from long, long years ago—

THE MADONNA

Herself, yet not as when she fled away,
The young and blooming novice, fair and gay,
But a grave woman, gentle and serene.
The outcast knew it. It was what she might have been!
But as she gazed and gazed, a radiance bright
Filled all the place with strange and sudden light.
The nun was there no longer, but instead
A figure with a circle round her head,
A ring of glory, and a face so meek,
So soft, so tender, Angela strove to speak
And stretched her hand out crying, "Mary mild,
Mother of mercy, help me! help thy child!"
And Mary answered, "From thy bitter past,
Welcome, my child, O welcome home at last!
I filled thy place. Thy flight is known to none,
For all thy daily duties I have done.
Gathered thy flowers, and prayed and sang and slept.
Didst thou not know thy place was kept?
Kind hearts are here; yet would the tenderest One
Have limits to His mercy? God has none."
And Mary vanished.
Back hurried Monica. But where
Was the poor beggar she left lying there!
Gone! Only Angela at the gateway stood,

THE MADONNA

Laden with hawthorn from the wood!
And never did a day pass by again,
But the old portress with a sigh of pain
Would sorrow for her loitering, with a prayer
That the poor beggar in her wild despair
Might not have come to any ill, and when she ended
“God forgive her!”—humbly then
Did Angela bow her head and say “Amen!”

Of all the blessed offices attributed to
the Mother of our Lord, none will so
appeal to every mother's heart as that it
is her part to comfort the little children
who have gone to heaven without their
mothers. No un comforted Rachel can
without effort resist the thought, that her
little ones are nestled safe

At Mary's feet,
The children's place in heaven, who softly sings
A little chant to please them, slow and sweet.
Or smiling strokes their gently folded hands

THE MADONNA

Or gives them her white roses, or her beads to play
with.

Yet in spite of flower and song,

They often lift a wistful look that pleads

And asks her, why their mothers stay so long.

Then the dear saint makes answer, she will call

Them very soon. Meanwhile they are beguiled

To wait and listen while she tells them all

A story of her Jesus as a Child.

Such stories of her miraculous power
and tender heart have captivated many a
heart and led it on to Mariolatry. Surely,
if she knows it, "as she sits meek in
heaven," she would say to us all as did the
angel of the Apocalypse to St. John, who
fell down before him: "Worship God!"



C. Müller.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

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